

REMARKS

The above amendments and following remarks are responsive to the points raised in the December 15, 2005 non-final Office Action as well as the points raised during a telephonic interview with the Examiner on March 10, 2006. Upon entry of the above amendments, Claim 1 will have been amended and Claims 1, 3-8, and 10-13 will be pending. No new matter has been introduced. Entry and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statements April 11, 2005 and October 12, 2005

On April 11, 2005, Applicants filed an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS), which accompanied the Response and Request for Reconsideration filed on the same date.

The July 29, 2005 final Office Action did not include an initialed, dated, and signed copy of the Form PTO-1449 Information Disclosure Citation (Form PTO-1449) submitted with the April 11, 2005 IDS. A review of the Image File Wrapper available through private PAIR via the United States Patent and Trademark Office Internet web site, shows that the above-identified IDS has been received by the USPTO and placed of record in the application file. For the Examiner's convenience, a copy of the IDS, printed from PAIR, was submitted with the Preliminary Amendment filed October 12, 2005.

On October 12, 2005, Applicants filed an additional Information Disclosure Statement (IDS), which accompanied the RCE filed on the same date.

The December 15, 2005 non-final Office Action did not include an initialed, dated, and signed copy of the Form PTO-1449 Information Disclosure Citation (Form PTO-1449) submitted with the October 12, 2005 IDS. A review of the Image File Wrapper through private PAIR also shows that this IDS has also been received by the USPTO and placed of record in the application

file. For the Examiner's convenience, a copy of this IDS, printed from PAIR, is also submitted with this Amendment.

In view of the above, Applicant requests that the Examiner consider the cited prior art and return a copy of the initialed, dated, and signed Form-1449s to Applicants with the next Office Action.

Telephonic Interview of March 10, 2006

In the morning of March 10, 2006, a telephonic interview between Applicant's undersigned representative and Examiner Safaipour, Art Unit 2627, TC-2600, of the United States Patent and Trademark Office. The time, courtesy, and insight provided by the Examiner during the interview is appreciated.

The interview focused on the two "wherein" clauses of Claim 1 in view of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, set forth in the non-final Office Action of December 15, 2005. Various passages of both the detailed description and figures, where Applicant believes the subject matter of the Claim 1 "wherein" clauses are supported, were discussed during the interview. Such specific passages and figures are discussed in more detail below in Applicant's response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. In addition, other issues surrounding claim language clarity were also discussed.

Although no specific language for amending Claim 1 was agreed upon that would, in the Examiner's opinion, obviate the outstanding rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, Applicant's amendments and remarks presented herein are responsive to the issues raised and discussed during the interview. The Examiner also urged that further consideration would be provided upon the filing of an Amendment.

Response to Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph

Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, on the basis that Claim 1 fails “to comply with the enablement requirement” in that the “[s]pecification does not disclose that ‘wherein said second diffusion region is common to light beams coming from the plurality of light sources, and wherein the plurality of light sources are shifted from a plane, which is normal to a surface of the diffusion region and pass through a center of the first diffusion region in a width direction, in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction’”.

Support for the Claim 1 language of:

“wherein said second diffusion region is common to light beams coming from the plurality of light sources”

is found at least in the original specification at (1) the paragraph bridging Pages 5 and 6 and, in particular, Page 5, Line 23, through Page 13, Line 2, in which it is stated that

“a diffusion region for reflecting and/or diffusing an incoming light beam across a longitudinal direction, comprises diffusion means inserted in an optical path of the light which is emitted by the light source and enters the entrance surface”, and

(2) the paragraphs from Pages 13, Line 20, through Page 15, Line 13, in which it is stated that

“the light-transmitting resin 26 is applied onto the LEDs 21, 22, and 23 by, e.g., potting of the like to protect the surfaces of the LEDs. The three-dimensional pattern portion 27 can be formed by sandblasting that blows iron or glass powder on to the surface of the light transmitting resin 26. The width and depth of the three-dimensional pattern...In this embodiment, the three-dimensional pattern portion 27 is formed on the surface of the light-transmitting resin 26, but an independent member may be adhered to the surface of the light-transmitting resin 26 by an adhesive or the like to obtain a three-dimensional portion.”

It is the light transmitting portion 26 with the three-dimensional surface 27, in this embodiment, that encompasses a diffusion region common to light beams coming from the plurality of light sources. Other such disclosed common diffusion regions include, for example, (1) elements 26 and 28, as shown in and discussed in the specification relative to Figure 3, (2) elements 26, 27,

and 28, as shown in and discussed in the specification relative to Figure 4, and (3) the three-dimensional portion of element 12, as shown in and discussed in the specification relative to Figure 5.

The second “wherein” clause of Claim 1 has been amended by replacing the word “shifted”, in Line 12, with the language --disposed at positions in a direction perpendicular to said longitudinal direction and offset--, adding the word --thereof-- after the word “direction” in the penultimate line, and deleting the last eight words of Claim 1 and the preceding comma. Primary support in the original disclosure are found in the second full paragraph on Page 12 of the specification, in particular, Page 12, Lines 15-18, as well as Figure 1B, which shows a schematic view of the illumination device with the LEDs 21, 22, and 23 disposed at positions in a direction perpendicular to said longitudinal direction and offset from a plane, which is normal to a surface of the diffusion region 11 and pass through a center of the diffusion region 11 in a width direction thereof.

Accordingly, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1, 3-8, and 10-13 are in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

AUTHORIZATION

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required for filing this Amendment and Request for Reconsideration to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4719.

Respectfully submitted,

MORGAN & FINNEGAN, L.L.P.

Dated: March 15, 2006

By: 

Brian W. Brown

Registration No. 47,265

(202) 857-7887 Telephone

(202) 857-7929 Facsimile

Correspondence Address:

MORGAN & FINNEGAN, L.L.P.
Three World Financial Center
New York, New York 10281-2101
(212) 415-8700 Telephone
(212) 415-8701 Facsimile